

APPENDIX

SONG OF THE BIRDS

The title of the book was taken from a Catalan folksong, El Cant Dell Ocells. It was an encore piece that Pablo Casals began playing regularly from 1941 as a statement against the tyranny of fascism as he was forced into exile. The first time that Casals played the piece in Bern during World War II, he made the following announcement: “In this melody of the greatest mysticism you will hear the expression of a melancholy corresponding to the sadness of our time, from which my country was the first to suffer”.

The metaphor of Song of the Birds is carried through some of the letters in the book, expressing freedom and hope to the survivors. The use of the metaphor is also intended to imply an oral tradition, passing the story of the Shoah from one generation to the next.

I played this heartfelt melody at the funeral of my brother Philip, for it was a piece of music that always inspired us, and it alone could evoke the enormity of such sadness for me.

The cover of the book was taken from the artwork on the sheet music from which I played.

BOOK I

The first photo is the Fruchter family portrait taken around 1926 – 1927 in Sacel, Maramores Romania. The next is even an earlier photo of a young Solomon, followed by his parents Schmuell and Chantze. The following group of photos show the family through the 1930's.

The first documents are three American Red Cross correspondences. The photo that follows is the synagogue where all the Jews were forced to wait, the staging ground for their deportation from Sighet, Romania. The next couple of photos show their possessions in the street, followed by the empty street of the ghetto. Then you see an Iron Guard soldier bringing a Jewish family to their transport onto Auschwitz. These photos were obtained in Romania and were taken by an unknown photographer.

The next document is a Hungarian newspaper article dated 7-16- 44, describing a Judenrein (without Jews) Mamamores

The photographs of the liberation of Bergen Belsen are taken from The British Documentary ‘ Dust and Ashes’. When I first viewed this film in 1979, I saw my mother in three different segments. The three crematoria photos were taken by a British soldier.

The book ends with my uncle Meyer returning to Romania, after his ordeal as a forced laborer on the Russian front, and my mother Lucy and her sister Rose arriving in Sweden.

BOOK II

This book covers the period from August 1945 to November, 1945. The photographs of the Lübeck delousing center, three Hungarian girls, Highbridge and a British soldier with Hungarian boy survivor, were taken by an unknown photographer. The photographs of Ellis Island and the lower east side were from the documentary series

‘Heritage, Civilization, and the Jews’. The photograph of Kramer, the head of the Belsen concentration camp came from the previously mentioned British documentary.

Next to a poem that my mother wrote in 1975, there is a photograph of their home in Sighet 1986, taken on the day before it was demolished.

Rosie and Lucy left Sweden for New York on November 17, 1945.

BOOK III

This book opens with my Uncle Meyer in a DP camp in Germany (Welzler bei Kassel D.P. 538), where he married Fanny Katz. The following series of wedding pictures show Rosie’s marriage to Abe Meth and Lucy’s marriage to Murray Gilman in New York. Then you see the emotional arrival of my uncle in America in 1948, as depicted in two newspaper articles.

What follows are the births of their children, the arrival of the second generation, another chorus in the Song of the Birds.

The book ends with my grandfather’s death in Jerusalem.. A family portrait in 1965, a photo of Rosie, Meyer, and Lucy in the 1980’s, and the Yad Vashem testimonies.

The original letters were written in Yiddish, Hungarian and Romanian translated by my mother Lucy and typed by Philip Gilman.

This book is dedicated to our children, the third generation: Zachary Gilman, Emily and Solana Fruchter, Matthew and Alex Blaufarb, Steven, Rebecca and Jonathan Fruchter. May the Song of the Birds be shared with future generations. By making history personal, hope may become universal. If one realizes that horror can strike any family anywhere at anytime, then, by process of identification, another’s suffering can become one’s own. Another valuable lesson of the Shoah will thus have been taught, shedding peace and freedom for all mankind.

David Gilman